September 5, 2020

Dear City Manager Owens:

We briefly met some time ago at a reception at the Investigations and Training Center. I am a former chief of police with the department. I read recent media reports that the Commission is considering memorializing the tragic deaths of two individuals who lost their lives during the turbulence and riots of 1970. This was a difficult year for everyone in the City as all were gripped with fear from the complexity of unforeseen events coming together at the time. I had graduated from the Lawrence school system and was a KU student at the time. Since the City was less than half the population it is today, I knew many of the individuals involved in the different incidents. Since 1973, I have worked, on and off, with writing a more comprehensive view of the events as I saw them.

My research includes personal observations; information from police reports, some no longer available; and personal interviews with the individuals involved. I have studied contemporary accounts of the Lawrence Journal World and other underground material available in the Wilcox Collection at Kansas University.

I am offering my brief synopsis of the events of 1970 to you and ask that copies of the document be forwarded to the Commission. I have already copied the file to Chief Brixius as I doubt he is well informed about events occurring long before his career began. This is not a comprehensive view of the year. I have only focused on some of the events leading to the confrontations that involved the deaths of Mr. Dowdell and Mr. Rice.

I would note that information from sources, such as the Watkins Museum, is fairly accurate, but not always. I toured the Museum a couple of years ago and some of the important individuals shown in some photos in their displays are incorrectly identified. I felt some of the observations in the exhibits were out of place and, perhaps, not reflective of the overall community mood of that year. I tried to explain to our guide who, frankly, dismissed my observations. In his defense, I did not identify myself or the reasons for my familiarity with the events. I dropped it as I did not wish to distract from my colleague's enjoyment of the tour.

My issues are threefold: 1) According to knowledgeable officials associated with the case, Mr. Dowdell was involved in a criminal conspiracy to murder a law enforcement officer. Even if not, he attacked police officers with a handgun. 2) The identity of Mr. Rice's shooter has never been established. Mr. Rice's parents sued the police department and were unsuccessful. 3) Police officers and fire fighters are not recognized, although they sustained serious injuries and life changing events that impacted them, in addition to the damage sustained by the community.

I hope this information is of value to you and to the Commission's deliberations. If I may be of additional assistance, please contact me.

Sincerely yours,
/s / Ron
W. Ronald Olin, Ph.D.
Chief of Police (Ret.)

A Synopsis of Events of 1969 and 1970 Lawrence, Kansas

A Short History

Lawrence, Kansas, was not immune to the politics of the 1960s. The Civil Rights Act was passed in 1964, deadly riots occurred in Los Angeles (Watts) in 1965, Cleveland in 1966, and 159 race riots in cities in 1967. Later in 1968, riots occurred in Washington D. C. and Kansas City, Missouri, after the assassinations of Martin Luther King, Jr. in Memphis in April, and Robert F. Kennedy in Los Angeles two months later. Locally, there was an emerging mix at the University of Kansas of black political radicalism, an active anti-Viet Nam war movement, an emerging feminist movement, and a drug fueled "hippie" movement that was generally anti-government or anti-establishment. Lawrence was a politically charged location as the result of activities occurring nationally and internationally.

Some local political controversy emerged with the hiring of Leonard Harrison, a Wichita native who came to the City in 1967 while his wife was pursuing a graduate degree in history at the University of Kansas. Harrison was hired by the Ballard Community Center in North Lawrence, the old Lincoln School, as assistant director. A political struggle developed between white liberals who had supported the Center and other locals who liked Harrison's more focused black-only and Black Power political stances.

During the time that Harrison was influential in the minority community, he was at the fore front of encouraging racially divisive politics into the City. He was a mentor to a generation of blacks that included a high school student named Rick Dowdell. His tenure between 1967 and 1970 represents some of the most turbulent times in Lawrence history. Harrison's influence on events in the City of Lawrence should not be underestimated.

Lawrence continued in 1969 and 1970 to attract national attention. An article in the Los Angeles Free Press on February 27, 1970, advised anyone who wished to be where the action would be this summer should go to Berkley, California, or Lawrence, Kansas. The newspaper published an article with their advice entitled "River—City: Growing Dope for the Nation" (February 27, 1970, p. 34).

The Lawrence Police Department was undergoing significant organizational and morale issues as the result of the creation of a "Department of Public Safety" under the direction of a Texas Department of Public Safety, highway patrol officer named Gilbert
D. Smith. Under the new DPS umbrella organization, selected police officers and fire fighters were crossed trained to do both police and fire response. The DPS officers wore "plain clothes", i.e., gray slacks, white shirts, black ties, and blue blazers. DPS officers drove non-traditional cars that were, generally, more powerful and newer than regular police patrol vehicles, and

were assigned to police and fire calls. The police department was still administered by a police superintendent, R. Richard Stanwix, and

the fire department by a fire chief, F. C. “Fritz” Sanders. However, both reported directly to the Director of Public Safety Smith, who then reported to the City Manager Ray Wells.

For the most part, neither the police officers nor fire fighters liked the arrangement. Resulting tensions between those DPS “specialists” and regular uniformed police officers and fire fighters were significant. Incidents between the two divided police and fire forces occurred whether in heated personal exchanges on the street or the near fist fights in the locker and briefing rooms.

South Park Recreation Center—June 27, 1969

At 23:17 on June 27, 1969, a report was received of a fight in progress in South Park by the bandstand. Officers responded and arrested two juvenile Mexican males. During the arrest, they met resistance, both physical and verbal, from several black youths in the park. The incident was unrelated to a dance being held at the South Park Recreation Center that involved approximately 30 black youths.

After completing the detention of the intoxicated Mexican males, the officers left the area after fighting off black males who tried to free the suspects. A confrontation ensued. At approximately 23:40 that evening officers were notified that pop bottles and rocks were being thrown at passing motorists in South Park. Officers responded and dispersed a group of black males and one black female without identifying the source of the disturbance. The violence extended downtown where store windows, and other vandalism occurred. Cars driving on Massachusetts Street were physically attacked by individuals kicking vehicles or pelting them with projectiles. A windshield in one police cruiser was destroyed during the ensuing response.

By 00:30 on the 28th of June, Director Gilbert Smith and Police Superintendent Richard Stanwix had arrived on the scene and approached a group of black youths in front of the Recreation Center. While approaching the Center, someone threw a projectile at a citizen. He stopped, got out of his vehicle, and was attacked by an unknown black assailant. Smith and Stanwix who were nearby advised they did not see the altercation. Smith remained outside the Center while Stanwix entered, found the dance’s sponsor, and ordered the dance terminated. The music stopped at approximately 00:40, with the building cleared by 00:50 hours.

The series of three encounters left one citizen treated and released from hospital, and property damage including a damaged police vehicle. Director Smith later reported to City Manager Ray Wells that: “This would indicate that our racial problems might be on an increase; In my opinion the three incidents were not planned but were spontaneous; and A (sic) limited amount of feedback from citizens through one or two officers indicates that the populace does not feel that enough positive actions was (sic) taken by

the police.”

The Year 1970

Radical newspapers were publishing in Lawrence including Vortex, which primarily represented the radical student movement, and Harambee, representing the black power perspective. An active drug culture was already in place with marijuana and LSD prevalent in the student communities. Not all publications advocated peaceful existence with each other as Vortex ran articles in its April 1, 1970 issue on "How to Buy a Gun" and "Seize the Time!"

Anchor Savings, April, 8 1970

On April 8, 1970, a bomb was placed at Anchor Savings, a bank located at 9th and Ohio.

The Kansas Union—April 20, 1970

On April 20, 1970, an arson attack on the Kansas Union led to millions of dollars in damages and the beginning of martial law in the City of Lawrence.

April 21, 22, 23, 1970

Because the police department had gone on two twelve hour shifts in an attempt to maintain enough manpower to respond to increased police activity, the City of Lawrence asked for the National Guard and the Governor placed the City under curfew for three nights (18:00 to 06:00), April 21, 22, and 23, 1970. In defiance of the curfew, the "hippie" element housed around the University area set numerous fires, and as fire equipment entered the area they were subjected to sniper fire and projectiles, later requiring police coverage of fire fighters while on their runs. Sixteen fire runs were made to the 1200 Block of Oread at the "White House" during this time.

June 24, 1970—Promotion of R. Richard Stanwix to Chief of Police

The morale and organizational chaos within the Lawrence Police Department reached a crescendo with the dismissal of Gilbert Smith as Director of Public Safety.

A June 25th Lawrence Journal World editorial noted the final promotion of R. Richard Stanwix (to Chief of Police) after his holding titles such as "acting" chief of police and "police superintendent." Editors noted the failures of a retired military officer (Chief Delbert Richardson) and a "textbook experiment by the previous administration involving a public safety director (Smith). That was equally unsuccessful."

Mrs. Mildred Johnson—Thursday, July 16, 1970

Mrs. Mildred Johnson was shot in her front yard at 845 New York Street. The shooters fled to the Afro-House, a house at 946½ Rhode Island Street. Firebombs were ignited at Lawrence Launderers and Dry Cleaners, downtown, and did considerable damage to the Santee Apartments, 1101 Indiana Street. Numerous bullets were shot into the Wilson Glass Company, 519 New York Street.

Melvin C. Reynolds—Thursday, July 16, 1970

The Afro-House was a meeting location maintained by the KU Black Student Union. The primary occupant of Afro-House was Gary Jackson, assistant dean of men at KU who was also an assistant instructor of African Studies. (Jackson was later connected to a purchase of ammunition allegedly used in attacks on Lawrence police officers. KU funding was allegedly used in the purchase. These issues were reported as the catalyst for Jackson's eventual firing from the University on July 26, 1970.)

About the time of the Johnson shooting, Melvin Eugene Reynolds, was shot while sitting on the front porch of the Afro-House. He identified the shooter as someone in a passing vehicle on 10th Street, and later identified the shooter as an unknown Lawrence police officer. Birdshot recovered from the front porch was later identified in laboratory analysis as identical to that extracted from Reynolds at Lawrence Memorial Hospital after treatment for his injuries.

A subsequent Kansas Bureau of Investigation report released and published in full in the Lawrence Journal World, August 22, 1970, p. 13, clearly indicated that Mr. Reynolds was shot by a colleague in the Afro-House.

> A crime scene investigation conducted at the Afro-House reflected what appeared to be blood stains on the front porch…Above the porch upon which Mr. Reynolds was seated is a balcony adjoining several windows to the second story of the building. The floor of the balcony is horizontal and several feet above the ceiling over the porch. A shotgun blast hole was discovered on the floor of the balcony, and the path of the blast traveled through the floor of the balcony, and then through the ceiling of the porch above the position where Mr. Reynolds was located at the time he was wounded. In the space between the floor of the balcony and the ceiling of the porch were discovered a number of pellets similar in size to the ones that hit Mr. Reynolds.
>
> Physical evidence discovered at the crime scene, considered with Mr. Reynolds' statement of his position at the time he was injured, is consistent with the conclusion that he was shot by someone on the second-floor porch rather than someone in a horizontal plane with the porch.
>
> The perception in the community was fear. There appeared to be

random sniper attacks on both the white and black community. Everyone seemed to be at risk, and no one felt safe.

Rick "Tiger" Dowdell—Thursday, July 16, 1970

Rick "Tiger" Dowdell attended McAlister Grade School (now demolished but then located in the 1400 block of Rhode Island Street), Central Junior High School, and Lawrence High.

Later on the same evening, a report of gunfire near New York School brought a police response to the neighborhood. A marked police vehicle driven by Patrolman Kenneth Avey, was ambushed sustaining bullet damage. This was not the first incidence of patrol vehicles receiving gunfire. Two males were seen leaving the area and entering the Afro-House on the north side of 10th Street west of Connecticut. While no identification of the shooters could be made, surveillance was initiated on the Afro-House. Avey joined Patrolman William Garrett in Garrett's patrol car discussing whether to leave the area or to confront the occupants of Afro-House. While engaged in the discussion, a male exited the House entering a Volkswagen with Oklahoma tags. The van was driven by Franki Cole and the passenger was Rick "Tiger" Dowdell. The van proceeded west on 10th Street running the stop sign at 10th and New Hampshire Street, turned north in the alley between Massachusetts Street and New Hampshire, turned right, to the east running a stop sign at 9th and New Hampshire and then abruptly turned into the alley between New Hampshire and Rhode Island Streets. Gestures by the passenger made the driver turn back into 9th Street confront the occupants of Afro-House, hitting the curb and disabling the van. Dowdell exited with revolver in hand.

Cole's VW overshot the alley striking the curb. According to the Journal World, June 17, 1970, pp. 1-2,

> The officers said they saw Dowdell get out of the passenger side door with a gun in his hand. Garrett ordered Dowdell to halt and fired a warning shot into the air. Garrett said Dowdell shot back at him once and he then fired three times at Dowdell.
>
> Dowdell was hit in the back of the head and neck by one shot and apparently died instantly. He was pronounced dead at the scene by County Coroner (Dr.) James Reed at about 22:45. A .357 Ruger Blackhawk single-action pistol was found a few inches from Dowdell's left hand according to officers. He was wearing a shoulder holster.

The account given in the Vortex concluded a different view that "Tiger" Dowdell was "murdered". In their July-August 1970 edition, p. 2, they suggested:

> Near by the school, (New York School) is Afro-House, an immediate target of police suspicion, and Avey headed there, supposedly

following two suspicious blacks. Soon several other squad cars closed in on Afro-House with lights out.

> In one of the cars was Garrett. At that moment Franki Cole pulled up to the house in her VW. Rick Dowdell wanted to leave the House because he knew the cops would single him out. His life had been threatened by different cops on several occasions. Dowdell asked Franki to drive him to his girlfriend's house. They were immediately followed by at least one squad car with lights out. Unsuccessfully attempting to ditch them, Franki overshot an alley only two blocks from Afro-House. Rick Dowdell stepped from the car and was murdered by Garret.
>
> The local black newspaper, Harambee, called Dowdell "our fallen young Black Prince. . ." and that his "murder and all other attempts of genocide of Black People shall be our rallying cry as we go about Liberation by WHAT EVER MEANS NECESSARY!!!!!" (p.1.)

Patrolman William Garrett told a more complex story. He related that the VW turned into the alley and the passenger had made an abrupt motion with his hands. Garrett interpreted the gesture to mean: "Go On!" The driver (Cole) pulled back to the left and in doing so, struck the curb. Dowdell leapt from the vehicle drawing a weapon. Avey exited from the passenger side of the patrol car with a shotgun and aimed it at Dowdell. He pulled the trigger, but he had failed to release the safety and no shot was fired. Dowdell ran down the alley and east between two houses out of sight.

By running down into the darkness east between two houses, Dowdell successfully evaded Avey and Garrett. Garrett stopped chasing him and turned back to return to the patrol car. He was then fired upon by a figure on the south side of a fence in the alley, near a house to the south of his location. Garrett advised that all his firearms training had involved shooting two times at a target, a "double tap." Garrett advised that he shot two times, and then a third time into the darkness in the center of the alley without seeing his target. One shot struck Dowdell in the back of the head. Garrett concluded that "the man really wanted to kill a cop." (Interview with Garrett, April, 1973.)

The Kansas Bureau of Investigation inquiry of the incident concluded that the two, Cole and Dowdell, had used the VW to draw officers into an ambush by committing traffic violations and having the pursuing officers follow the vehicle to the alley behind the Afro-House. Cole panicked and entered the alley one block to the west rather than the alley leading to the Afro-House. When corrected by Dowdell, Cole was unable to recover and piled the vehicle into the curb. Dowdell jumped from the van and made his escape. He returned to shoot an unknown police officer and was then shot himself.

In an interview with William Tucker, a lab technician for the Kansas Bureau of Investigation in March 1972 (at the Kansas Law Enforcement Training Center, Yoder, Kansas), Tucker related specifics of the autopsy investigation performed on Dowdell. Paraffin casts of both of Dowdell's hands

were taken by Kansas Bureau of Investigation Special Agents at the Lawrence Memorial Hospital Morgue. These casts are chemically treated to determine if nitrates are present on the hands, and their patterns, if any, over

the hands. Tucker conducted tests using Dowdell's Ruger Blackhawk by firing it and then taking paraffin casts of his own hands. These were compared to the casts from Dowdell. Tucker concluded that Dowdell had fired the weapon based upon nitrates present and patterns made by the nitrates on his and Dowdell's casts. Tucker was able to complete these tests with such efficiency and accuracy, that he was able to reveal to the Kansas Bureau of Investigation Special Agents in the field a fact not known to them. Dowdell was left-handed and had fired the gun with his left hand. This corroborated the physical evidence with the pistol being found next to his left side, and a shoulder holster Dowdell was wearing with the pistol on the right side of his body.

In a controversial speech at the Lawrence Kiwanis Club in the late 1970s, retired County Attorney Mike Elwell said that the police, KBI, and his office had a confidential informant in the Afro-House during this period. The confidential informant reported that the van was to have lured police into the alley between Rhode Island and Connecticut Streets where an ambush had been arranged. The members of Afro-House were determined to kill a Lawrence Police Officer and to hang his head on a spear to terrorize law enforcement. By missing the turn, Cole foiled the ambush. It should be noted that Elwell was attacked orally by a minority member of the Kiwanis Club for his opinions. The Kiwanian did not dispute the account. In fact, he argued vehemently that now was the time for healing and moving forward, not reliving the past, as bad as it was. The subsequent confrontation between the two men led to the resignation of the club member and, to my knowledge, never another public speech by Elwell concerning these tumultuous times.

Lt. Eugene "Skinny" Williams—Friday, July 17, 1970

Vandalism and gunfire started in the east side of Lawrence about 21:30 hours. There were reports of blacks shooting out streetlight at 10th and New York, 10th and New Jersey, and 10th and Pennsylvania Streets. Reports were received about 22:15 of a considerable armed group moving east from the Afro-House. The dispatch to police officers was confusing. While the Kansas Bureau of Investigation report advised that at 22:30 there were 45 to 50 armed blacks moving east on 10th Street using low whistles and hand gestures covering their advance and rear in a military fashion, many monitoring the police channel heard the police communications center dispatch: "four to five" armed individuals in the area.

Four police officers, Lt. Virgil Foust, Lt. Eugene "Skinny" Williams, and Patrolmen
G. Pinegar and D. Green parked their car at the Sale Barn, a livestock auction house located to the east of Hobbs Park (the Sale Barn has since been demolished and is now City property). The officers then walked into the area of 10th and Pennsylvania Street. They were ambushed by the group of individuals at the intersection. The attackers had climbed roof tops of

porches, garages, hid themselves in the shadows of houses, and positioned themselves behind cars at the intersection. In the subsequent exchange of gunfire, “Skinny” Williams was shot by a 00 buck pellet to the abdomen. The pellet struck a rib and circumvented his body travelling around the ribs to lodge in the spine. The air cleared as an ambulance entered the area to evacuate Williams. The firefight

resumed with the departure of the ambulance, and the introduction of additional police reinforcements. All police vehicles, many private vehicles, houses, and trees sustained damage from the intense gunfire.

The attack, occurring 24 hours after the shooting of Dowdell, was noted by Lt.
Foust in his report:

> Officers were answering a call from 1002 Pennsylvania ref.: armed colored subjects when a sniper fired and struck Lt. William (sic) in stomach. Patrolmen Pinegar and Lt. Williams returned fire with handguns. Patrolman Green was then fired upon by sniper on the back roof of 1002 Pennsylvania and he fired one time in response with shotgun. Lt. Willimas (sic) taken to L.M.H. treated by (Drs.) Hird and Penfield Jones. After ambulance left, officers were again fired upon by sniper from same location in back of 946 Pennsylvania. Officers returned fire this time accompanied by Sgt. Lemon, Merkel, Garcia, Tomason, Fox and Good. This time all shotguns were emptied along with 15 rounds of M-1 carbine by Sgt. Lemon and 6 rounds of 38 cal. by Patrolman Pinegar. Officers found 9mm empties M-1 carbine empties (30 caliber rifle), 20 gauge and 12 gauge shotgun and 22 rifle cartridges in area. (Foust police report P-10210, July 17, 1970)

Officers retreated because they had exhausted their ammunition supply and were defenseless. The encounter lasted 15 minutes.

The attackers retreated to their command location, a home in the 1000 block of Delaware (since demolished), with the shooters gathering on the front porch and inside to regroup. The author was observing the activity with binoculars from a position at the Sale Barn where he and others had been asked by Lt. Williams to protect their police vehicles. A phone call was made to 911 to advise the location of the snipers, and we watched as police cars came into view to block the street upon which an order was given by dispatch to “clear the area”.

It should be noted that the author was able to identify several of the shooters as they attended Lawrence High School with him. Others were unknown and likely from out of town. Seven armed men were seen on the porch after the shootings. The next day in the Kansas City Star, two black males were reported dead in “gangland slayings.” The individuals, shot-gunned to death, were never tied to the shootings in Lawrence.

The ambush of Lt. Williams created a fear in the white community in east Lawrence. A vigilante committee was setup and organized to protect neighbors. They concluded that any black walking their neighborhood after dark with a weapon was “fair game”. This created more headaches for the Lawrence Police Department.

The Kansas Highway Patrol was called upon to assist in the execution of police duties inside the City limits. A loan by the United States Air Force provided flack vests for all police officers and fire fighters operating inside the City of Lawrence.

Saturday, July 18, 1970

Saturday night was a slow, tense evening for the citizens of Lawrence. The White House was again the scene of arson resulting in fire and police response to the 1200 block of Oread. A group of three to four hundred people assembled in the street. The police and fire fighters were targets of thrown objects, and someone let off a string of firecrackers towards one of the officers. DPS officer Don Donoho advised that he had released the safety on his shotgun and had turned to fire on the perceived attacker(s). He observed a dozen or so unarmed citizens and decided not to shoot. He was so traumatized with this near tragedy that he went through the rest of the riots carrying an empty shotgun chamber.

Only three arrests were reported on Saturday, but all were made for "carrying concealed weapons". The City appeared to be an armed camp with whites and blacks arming and the police conducting traffic stops at rifle-point.

The black community was tense, however, the shooting of Lt. Williams seemed to satisfy many of the more radical individuals. The focus on further retaliation seemed lessened and then the "hippie", "yippie", "street people" at the top of the hill took over.

Sunday, July 19, 1970

Disturbances erupted on Oread Street with the Vortex (July-August edition, p. 2) reporting the following account.

> Several hundred people again grouped on oread (sic) street. Around 11:00 p.m. (23:00) the fire hydrant next to the chalk (Rock Chalk at 12th and Oread) was opened, bringing in the pigs. Tonight most of the pigs were wearing flack vests brought in by the K.B.I. But the people are practicing their marksmanship and the neck of a pig is always vunerable (sic). When the pigs came, the air was again filled with rock, sticks & bottles. Several pigs were hit, so they brought out the tear gas & threw it into a crowd of people who had just been sitting on the hill watching. And these people resolved to retaliate with more than rocks and sticks as they choked on the fucking gas for the first or the fifth time. The people are getting strong & learning how to fight. The wind had barely cleared the gas away & the people had already

regrouped. The street lights were knocked out. The fire hydrant was opened up again. One cadre of people started a large fire around a telephone pole while another blockaded the

street on the other side. When the pigs arrived this time there was literally a thunderstorm of bricks & the sound of crunching metal and breaking glass fill the air. This time, the pigs opened fire with at least two shotgun blasts. And the people regrouped again—near the white house. Within a half hour, it was on fire again. But the rain came and helped put it out. Most people went home. Many to arm themselves. The number of guerilla street fighters in lawrence (sic) increased exponentially saturday (sic) night.

But the pigs have not yet been made to pay for Rick Dowdell's death. The people of river city, both black & white, are determined that they will pay. Each & every member of the Lawrence police force should feel that his life is threatened because it is. This time it will be bodies and not buildings.

Nick Rice—Monday, July 20, 1970

A student, Nick Rice, visiting from his home in Leawood, was shot to death at 13th and Oread Street. The incident began about 21:30 when a group gathered around the Rock Chalk Café (12th and Oread) and a small brush fire was started. A fire hydrant was turned on. The fire quickly died out, but police and fire fighters entered the area to turn off the fire hydrant. Police decided to close the Rock Chalk Café and did so. The crowd refused to leave and was dispersed by tear gas thrown by officers. The incident appeared to be over by 22:00, but a crowd regrouped to turn over a Volkswagen van in the intersection of 12th and Oread. After successfully overturning the vehicle, several members of the crowd attempted to set it on fire.

Police returned to the area and dispersed the crowd with tear gas driving them towards the south. The crowd retaliated with bricks, rocks, sticks, and fireworks. Police officers involved in this incident believed the crowd to be armed and that the subjects lighting the fire were few in comparison to the size of the crowd. The order from command had been to arrest the arsonists for a felony, which they attempted to do. When the officers believed themselves to be under fire, they shot. (Interview with Donoho, May 17, 1974)

Vortex (September 16, 1970, p. 3) revealed its side of the story. The account is an evaluation of testimony given at the inquest for Rice held later.

Pigs Sedlak, Stroud, Pinegar, and McClure testify they were under a barrage of tomatoes and rocks, no injuries though. They're reading perfectly from Dan Young's (County Attorney) script, including, "We was comin down the street", and "I was in the marine corps before becomin' police officer." All saw man tossing matches at overturned VW in the middle of Oread. Heard someone "order" "shoot him." Stroud. Big dumb pork huntin' coons and kooks. Says he fired only

once at long haired youth, missed. Nick Rice was standing directly in line with Stroud's shot. Stroud fired with a 9 millimeter bullet. Wound in Rice was 9 millimeter. The truth is loose & rampages through the courtroom. . . K.B.I. agent sums up report. Says only one bullet found, but no blood on it. Dan

Young with his Nixonian flare moves in for surprise Hitchcock ending, "Who killed Nick Rice?"

Stroud was one of six officers at the scene who were carrying M-1 carbines. These fire .30 caliber shells, not 9-millimeter. Another four officers at the scene were carrying shot guns with .00 buck ammunition. Both Stroud and a second officer admitted firing their long guns.

If the bullet came from a police weapon, the bullet travelled, according to K.B.I. investigators from one end of the block to the other. Tests were conducted with photographs and surveys taken to determine the feasibility of the shot. From the intersection of 12th Street and Oread, the street slopes upward at a gradual incline to the intersection with 13th Street. Cars and trees lined the street that night. A fog of tear gas had also been laid in the area. Taking into account these and other problems such as bullet trajectory, a clear definable target, and intent to kill, the conclusion was that an area approximately 2" by 2" was available for a clear path from Stroud's rifle to Rice (K.B.I. report, July 1970). Rice would have been out of Stroud's line of sight if the shot were his. And it could not have been done intentionally.

An interview with Officer J. J. Stroud May 9, 1974, revealed that Stroud did fire his rifle, but could not account for his shot. He insisted that he was not the shooter of Rice. Stroud was sued by Rice's parents, but the lawsuit was dismissed for a lack of evidence.

Conclusion

As Kansas Attorney General Kent Frizzel, noted in a preface to the Kansas Bureau of Investigation report of these times:

> Quite frankly, I am amazed considering the conditions a policeman has to face in Lawrence, Kansas. Their starting wage is $506 per month. If they live long enough, they may increase that wage by $100 or $200. Included in their job is the opportunity to ride in a patrol car and be shot at. During the week of July 16 through 21, patrolmen were fired upon every night. During the same time period many patrolmen were forced to work 12-or-more-hour shifts, repeatedly facing persons who were demonstrating – some of them peacefully demonstrating, others not. (Lawrence Journal World, August 22, 1970, p. 13)

The five days in July from 16 to 21, 1970, were among the most violent and disruptive to the City of Lawrence since Quantrill. The damage of lost lives and property did not stop there. Principal players suffered on. Many officers left the department. Some left the profession. Lt. Williams required months of recuperation, therapy, complications, and retired. Garrett was reinstated following the inquest but was reduced to an office-boy by an administration afraid to return him to the streets. He later changed agencies, and then professions. A new candidate for Sheriff emerged to

challenge unsuccessfully Rex Johnson. Leonard Harrison fled to Tanzania to avoid

felony charges from Sedgewick County, and was pardoned by Kansas Governor Joan Finney in 1993.

W. R. Olin, Ph.D.
September 5, 2020